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THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE LATE ROMAN REPUBLIC

PART I

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A picture of the position of women in the late Roman Republic, whether taken individually or as a class, requires a background both legal and social against which to view the figures of the women as they went to and fro freely in the society of the last century before our era. For that they walked freely and mingled with the men of their acquaintance in a way denied entirely to their Greek sisters we shall see. To be sure, they never won nor claimed an equal share with men, but as time went on they found ways and means whereby to spread their influence most effectively through their management of men.

The Greek, so remarkably feminist, as Mrs. Putnam points out,¹ in literature, art, and social science, was very anti-feminist in practice. Think of the worship of Athena in her city and of all the numerous artistically perfect representations of her in that city's art. She was the goddess of wisdom, the goddess of war. She was the goddess whose genius directed the counselors of the state. But of the women under her protection Plutarch said: "Phidias supported the statue of Aphrodite at Elis upon a tortoise to signify the protection necessary for maidens, and the homekeeping silence that is becoming to married women."²

Or in drama, think of the tragedies that dealt so largely with the psychological study or the tragic fate of some great woman; or in comedy, the shrewd wit and political competence, the power of organization, and the readiness in debate that women were represented as possessing. Or in religion, think of the part

¹ *The Lady*, pp. 1-68. New York, 1910.

² In *Concerning Isis and Osiris*.

played in the Eleusinian mysteries by women, or in the yearly festival to Athena. Even in political life, as an ideal for the state, Plato wrote: "In the administration of a state neither a woman as a woman nor a man as a man has any special function, but the gifts of nature are equally diffused in both sexes; all the pursuits of men are the pursuits of women also, and in all of them woman is only a lesser man."¹

We may have in that ideal an echo of the ideas voiced by Aspasia. But she was not an example of the Greek lady, she a "stranger-woman" from Miletus, one of that brilliant class of Hetairae who influenced so greatly the age of Pericles. But of the women of Athens, the citizen population, we never hear. Probably they were fulfilling that duty which Thucydides asserts Pericles had laid down as the ideal for a woman, "not to show more weakness than is natural to her sex . . . and not to be talked about for good or evil among men."²

As Mrs. Putnam points out, it seems strange that Pericles did not himself recognize the paradox in the Greek attitude that "in standing up to voice the ideals of the people that Athena had formed he should take no further account of the sex she was one of than to beg its representatives on earth to be at all costs ladylike." Whether the Greek type of woman was ladylike we can only judge if we use as the definition of that term the one suggested by Mrs. Putnam, "the female of the favored social class who is distinguished from the woman at large by the number of things she may not do."³ To the Greek that meant the management of a household, the superintendence of all the slaves of that household, and above all a seclusion within the house, and a separation from the outside world except on the occasion of the above-mentioned religious celebrations, which could not fail to have as its inevitable result the deterioration of the citizen-woman.

So long as the domestic relations were preserved merely as a safeguard to the maintenance of the state, and the attitude of so many of the Greeks could be expressed in the words of Menander,

¹ *The Republic*, quoted from James Donaldson, *Woman*, p. 74. London, 1907.

² *Pericles*, quoted from Mrs. Putnam, *The Lady*.

³ *Op. cit.*, Introduction.

that "a wife is a necessary evil," and women were at all times under the subjection of either their fathers or their husbands, we need not wonder that though there never was in the history of the world such a brilliant circle of great thinkers and artists as at one time in one city of Greece—we need not wonder that not one Athenian woman among them ever attained to any distinction in any department of art or science or literature. "In Rome as in Athens woman was subject to her father or his representative until she became subject to her husband. But while at Athens the spirit of the law prevailed and harmonized with the general social sentiment, in Rome it was in opposition to social sentiment, and was gradually modified by legal fictions and other compromises (as we shall see) until it bloomed into one of those complete anomalies that make us feel how similar ancient society was to our own."¹

Goodsell in his books, *The Family as a Social and Educational Institution*,² divides the continuance of the family as a social unit at Rome into two periods—from the founding of the city to the end of the Punic wars, when the ideals of the family life were stern, simple, and wholesome, though rigid; and from that time to the end of the Empire, in the fourth century A.D., a period of increasing laxity followed by the slowly penetrating influence of Christianity. Here as in so many phases of life at Rome the Punic wars serve as a dividing-line. The character of the family of the first period was that of the Greek state—a religious, legal, and economic unit under patriarchal control. The *patria potestas* extended to questions of life and death, as was recognized by the Laws of the Twelve Tables (*ca.* 450 B.C.), as well over the sons of the family as over the women; cf. Gaius *Institutes of Roman Law* ii. 96: "It should be noted that nothing can be granted in the way of justice to those *in potestate*, i.e., to slaves, children, and wives; for it is reasonable to conclude that, since these persons can own no property, they are incompetent to claim anything in point of law." And all through the first period, as Goodsell points out, this patriarchal character of the family continued, and the integrity of the family was preserved because "through centuries in its oldest male head was

¹ *Pericles*, quoted from Mrs. Putnam, *The Lady*.

² Pp. 112 ff. New York, 1915.

vested all religious rights, as priest, all legal rights, as the only 'person' recognized by law, and all the economic rights, as the sole owner of the family property."

Accordingly, a woman was *in patria potestate* until by marriage she was handed over to the power, *manus*, of her husband. Here again she was not a free agent, but completely under the control of her husband, who "could sell her labor, if not her person, to indemnify himself for fines he might have to pay incurred by her,"¹ or he could surrender his wife to a plaintiff who brought suit for any civil offense,² or he could kill her for adultery.³ And yet her position was always more honored and influential than in Greece, especially in Athens.

The Roman matron, as the Greek, was the absolute mistress of her household; but she was not confined to special quarters of the house as the Greek woman was (cf. Corn. Nepos, introd., par. 6). She mingled with the other members of the family in the house, and shared meals with her husband, though not reclining, and refraining from wine (cf. Val. Max. vi. 3. 9).⁴ Her birthday was celebrated (cf. Ovid, tr. v. 1 ff.) and on the *Matronalia*, March 1, she received congratulations and presents (cf. Tib. iii. 1).

In public also she was not so limited as the Greek woman.⁵ She attended banquets outside her own house (cf. Corn. Nepos, praef., par. 6; Cic. *Pro Cael.* 8. 20; *Ad Att.* v. 1. 3), as did also the Vestals and the *flaminica* (cf. Macrob. iii. 13. 11); place was made for her on the street, and she was not to be molested (cf. Plut. *Rom.* 20; Val. Max. v. 2. 1); she attended festivals in honor of the gods⁶ (cf. Liv. xxii. 10. 8; xxvii. 51. 7); except those in honor of Hercules (cf. Macrob. i. 12. 28; Juv. 9. 24); with the permission of her husband she might attend the performances in the theaters and circus (cf. Val. Max. vi. 3. 12; Cic. *De Har. resp.*

¹ Becker, *Gallus*, p. 156.

² Bryce, *Studies in History and Jurisprudence*, chapter on "Marriage and Divorce under Roman and English Law."

³ Cato, *De Dote, quae extant*, ed. Jordan, p. 68. Leipzig, 1860.

⁴ H. Blümner, *I. Müller's Handbuch*, IV, 2; II, 364.

⁵ Marquardt, *Privatleben*, pp. 57 ff.

⁶ H. Blümner, above cited.

12. 2; Plut. *Sulla* 35); and she made her appearance in the law courts, as a witness (cf. Tac. *Ann.* iii. 49), though in most cases unwillingly (cf. Suet. *Caes.* 74; Cic. *In Verr.* 1. 37. 94).

So the Roman matron was at once honored and subordinated; she was thoroughly respected and yet granted almost no legal rights. To quote Mr. James Bryce, "One can hardly imagine a more absolute subjection of one person to another who was nevertheless not only free but respected and influential as we know that the wife in old Rome was."¹

The whole position of women at Rome in all periods of society was dependent upon the conception of marriage;² for a *iustum matrimonium*, that is a marriage sanctioned by law and religion, and therefore legal in all its aspects, was of great importance, especially in the early years of the state, and not to be achieved without many forms and ceremonies. The forms were necessary to introduce a new human being into a family which consisted of human and divine beings. As the wife had to take a part in the worship of the family gods, and be with her husband a guardian of the Penates of her new home, she had, in early times, to go through the ceremony of *confarreatio* before transfer from *manus* of her father to that of her husband. The ceremony consisted in eating with the man to become her husband a sacred cake of *far*, offered to Jupiter Farenis, i.e., residing in the cake, in the presence of the Pontifex Maximus, the Flamen Dialis, and ten other witnesses. And a victim was slain to Ceres, and its skin covered the *sellae* on which the bride and groom sat. By the performance of these rites the religious character of the marriage was established (cf. Servius *Ad Aen.* iv. 374). The religious importance of the ceremony is shown, too, in the fact that throughout Roman history no one could hold the priesthood of Jupiter or of Mars or Quirinus, or the position of Rex Sacrorum, who had not been born of parents wedded by *confarreatio*; and in each case the priest himself must be wedded by the same ceremony (cf. Gaius i. 112).

The state also called for *iustum matrimonium* (cf. Cic. *De Off.* i. 17. 54), for Roman citizenship, for public and private rights,

¹ Goodsell, above cited.

² W. W. Fowler, *Social Life at Rome*, chap. v, "Marriage."

i.e., for *ius provocationis*, *ius suffragii*, and *ius bonorum*, public rights; for *ius commercii* and *ius conubii*, private rights.

There were two other ways by which a bride could come into the possession of her husband—by *coemptio*, which was really a form of contract whereby the father handed over to the husband, for a few pieces of silver, used symbolically, of course, his daughter. And there was *usus*, a kind of marriage which had as its basis the cohabitation of the two persons concerned for a year without any break. But long before the last century of the Republic “all three forms had become practically obsolete, or were only occasionally used for particular purposes. Women found it more to their advantage to remain *in patria potestate*, or, if the father were dead, *in tutela* of a guardian or *tutor*, and thereby to have the control of their own property. So the marriage *cum manu* was dropped, that is, the legal significance of the marriage ceremony was dropped.”¹

The old marriage, the *confarreatio*, had been indissoluble on the part of the woman except with full consent of the family council, though the man might overturn it, or even kill his wife for infidelity. “If you catch your wife,” was the law laid down by Cato the Censor, “in an act of infidelity, you would kill her with impunity without a trial; but if she were to catch you she would not venture to touch you with a finger, and indeed she has no right.” But the new marriage without *manu* gave the woman almost as much freedom as the man; for the tutelage custom originally founded in regard for control on the part of the family gradually lost its force and in the late Republic became a mere farce. So much so, indeed, that Cicero complains (cf. *Pro Mur.* 12. 27) that the lawyers had found ways and means whereby women no longer depended upon their guardians but their guardians upon them.² For the *tutores* managed the property of their wards to their own advantage quite frequently. Perhaps Cicero himself might plead guilty of that charge to a certain degree when he divorced Terentia to repair his financial straits by a marriage with his rich ward Publilia.

¹ *Ibid.*

² Teufer, *Zur Geschichte der Frauenemanzipation im alten Rom, eine Studie zu Livius xxxiv. 1-8*. Dissertation, Berlin, 1913.

Through this change in the marriage customs, *nuptiae solo consensu contrahuntur*, the husband had use of the *dos* only, in his wife's property; and that ceased if the marriage was broken off. In other words, the Roman matron was to all intents and purposes a free agent, controlling her own actions and to some extent her own property; for the control of the *gens* still prevented her from alienating that either by sale or by testament. And naturally with a relaxing of the marriage bond there came an increased number of divorces. Moreover, many women entered upon formal marriages in order to gain a matron's control of their property with the stipulated condition that divorce proceedings should immediately follow the marriage ceremony.

As Muirhead puts it,

The ever-increasing disregard of the marriage tie is one of those features in the history of the latter part of the Republic which strikes even the most unobservant. While from the first the law had denounced causeless separation and visited it with penalties, yet in principle it maintained the perfect freedom of divorce. With the simple and frugal habits of the first five centuries of Rome and the surveillance of the *consilium domesticum*, the recognition of this principle produced no evil results; family misunderstandings were easily smoothed over, and divorces were of rare occurrence. But from the time of enactment of the Moenian Law, in 168 B.C. (a statutory regulation regarding the forfeiture of the dowry in case of separation or repudiation), there was a steady change for the worse. The motives of the statute may have been of the best but its tendency was injurious; for not only did it indirectly facilitate divorce, but it rendered the idea of it familiar and overthrew that respect for the domestic council which had hitherto been a check upon divorce.¹

A contributing cause to this change in the status of woman was the result of the Punic wars, and of Rome's campaigns in Spain and Greece and Asia.² During the absence of such a large number of men from Rome throughout those years woman had had the opportunity of developing her natural ability and of asserting herself as an individuality. With the decrease in the number of men through the wars the social and economic importance of women was increased, as is always the case under such circumstances. Moreover, Rome's wealth had increased enormously, enabling men to give larger dowries to their daughters but also increasing

¹ *Roman Law*, pp. 148 f.

² Goodsell, above cited.

their reluctance to handing over such large properties to the control of their daughters' husbands. But above all, the status of women was influenced by that influx of Greek culture which occurred at this period, developing types of women like Clodia and Sempronia.

This tendency [says Goodsell] was fundamentally due to a steady deterioration of ancient family ideals; and this in turn was part of a wide-spread decline of moral standards following upon Rome's war of conquest. . . . Men and women alike were infected with the dry rot of selfishness and a frenzied pleasure-seeking, in consequence of which they looked upon the earlier, almost religious conceptions of family duties and responsibilities as troublesome and outgrown. When marriages were contracted, the motives were too often mercenary or concerned with mere personal gratification. Rarely in the senatorial class was marriage any longer regarded as a solemn obligation to the state and to the domestic gods. Concubinage and prostitution grew by leaps and bounds as men sought to satisfy their passions without assuming the cares of married life.¹

This whole process from the very beginnings of Rome's history to this period M. Boissier² has summed up admirably, adding, besides, the fact which would be a foregone conclusion from the obtaining of so much power on the part of women, namely, their gradual participation in public life. He says:

In a country where the family was respected as at Rome, women could not fail to be of importance. And it is also impossible that this influence, already important in the home, should not try to go beyond those limits; and the honorable position in private life would not tempt them one day to invade public life. The men of ancient Rome had an apprehension of this and so had tried to guard against it by placing women always in check, first by *patria potestas* and then by *tutela*—pretending to protect them, but in reality protecting themselves against them. Cato, their great enemy, had acknowledged this ingenuously when he opposed the repeal of the *lex Oppia*, fearing the day when *simul pares coeperint, superiores erunt*. That day was arriving just at the epoch which we are discussing. . . . In the decline of ancient customs, laws against women were no more regarded than others. . . . By the abolition of the old customs and laws women had become free.

In general, the first use of unaccustomed liberty is the abuse of that liberty. One cannot enjoy calmly rights of which one has been deprived for a long time. There always comes at first a sort of intoxication which it is hard to restrain. That happened now and drove women to various ends.

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Cicéron et ses amis*, pp. 172 ff.

But perhaps we are generalizing from too few instances if we use the plural there. Perhaps we should rather say drove some women to various ends. A consideration of the individuals therefore would more suitably come first and the generalization afterward. For the purpose of making such generalization we have collected the information which could be gathered from Cicero's letters, using the index to the Tyrrell and Purser edition; from Valerius Maximus, Suetonius, and Livy, using the indices to the Teubner edition of those texts; from the histories of Dio Cassius and Appian and Plutarch's *Lives*; from Orelli's *Onomasticon*; and from Drumann's *Geschichte Roms*, Groebe edition², 1902. This investigation is not exhaustive, but sufficient material was collected to make our thesis possible, namely, that the typical matron at Rome never dreamed of playing a part in history, just as today the height of aristocracy in some people's minds is attained by keeping out of the newspapers; and the women whom we find are either those whose "infamous deeds made their names famous," like Clodia, Fulvia, Caecilia Metella, or those who have been brought into prominence by the political pre-eminence of their husbands.

To be sure there are a few whose moral excellence exemplified that ideal of Roman womanhood in dignity, industry, and practical wisdom which Plutarch praises—such women as Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, and Porcia, wife of Marcus Brutus,¹ both morally pure and noble-minded women; or Aurelia, Caesar's mother,² or Octavia, the unhappy wife of Antonius.³ But the women of Cicero's letter are not of this type. Terentia, wife of Cicero, and Pomponia, wife of Quintus Cicero, we might agree with Mrs. Putnam in considering as examples of the surviving form of the simple *mater familias*, women who took but little part in the political careers of their husbands, even if Plutarch does say that Cicero complained that it would have been better if Terentia had attended to her housekeeping duties instead of meddling in politics. In this connection Fowler's criticism of Plutarch's account of Cicero's family affairs seems rather probable, when he says that the account is biased as coming from Tiro.⁴ And as

¹ Marquardt, above cited.

² Drumann, III², 128.

³ *Ibid.*, IV², 244.

⁴ Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

Cicero obviously loved this man much more than he did his wife, we can understand why the two were so hostile to each other. Also Fowler feels, justifiably it seems, that Terentia was the "victim of her husband's callousness rather than of her own shortcomings."

Women like Terentia and Pomponia seem to have had nothing in the way of "higher education" as Clodia, for instance, had; nor do their husbands seem to have expected from them any desire to share in their intellectual interests. And one cannot imagine Cicero married to a woman of taste and intellect. To be sure he seems to have practiced a certain system of education upon his daughter Tullia, and to have found her very much like himself; but one must wonder with Boissier¹ how she stood the system, and whether he wanted to make of her a philosopher or an orator, like Hortensia, the daughter of his great rival Hortensius. Boissier suggests that his success could in either case have hardly been less than it was in his efforts to make a philosopher of his son.

But Terentia was a good match for Cicero. She had brought him a large dowry, 120,000 drachmae (cf. Plut. *Cic.* 8); and owned houses in Rome and wooded land in Tusculum (cf. Cic. *Ad Att.* ii. 4). She seems to have managed all Cicero's business for him, except the large ventures intrusted to Atticus. And Cicero seems to have loved her devotedly until the disturbed condition of his finances so worked on his love as to kill it, and as Plutarch himself says (cf. Plut. *Cic.* 4),² Cicero's treatment of his second wife is a justification, so to speak, of Terentia. Discontent with his lot, self-interest, suspicion, and vague rumors of false friends blinded him and even Atticus made no efforts to bring peace between them.

The only connection which she seems to have had directly with Cicero's public life was during his attack upon the Catilinarians and in his complications with Clodius. Her enemies say that she had already in 62 B.C. formulated stern measures against the conspirators.³ And even if that is a myth, as Drumann suggests, we imagine that she had great influence upon Cicero by the force of her character. At least she, like other women of her day, could be used as tools (cf. *Ad Fam.* v. 6, where in a letter to P. Sestius

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 96.

² Drumann, VI, 685.

³ *Ibid.*

Cicero says that Sestius' wife Cornelia and Terentia are working for Sestius' interests, just as he himself and Q. Cornelius are doing). And report has it that she forced Cicero to bring testimony against Clodius because of her jealousy of Clodia.¹ As for the rest of Cicero's career, she shared and suffered from the ups and downs of his fortunes, and one is inclined to believe that she did the best she could during his exile and during his absence in Cilicia and while he was following the fortunes of Pompey to manage the business end of the family, since Cicero seemed to have little ability or concern for such matters. Perhaps the separation was caused by that incompatibility between culture and marriage which was so current in that age. At most we can see in the disturbance the fact that not even the philosophy of the man who boasted that the incidents of life touched him but little could save him from adopting that release from those disturbances which we find so common among men of lower standards.

We have mentioned the fact that one of the incentives to spur Terentia on to decisive measures for her husband's political career was her jealousy of Clodia. In Clodia Terentia found no mean rival, if it be true that Clodia tried to exert her power over Cicero as she did over so many men of her time. She is far from that type which Terentia might be said to represent. As Boissier describes her,²

she had all those qualities which a woman of the world today desires to possess or pretends she possesses. They thought differently at Rome [then]; and as courtesans were the only ones allowed the privileges of such a free and extravagant life [as Clodia pursued], every woman who sought out such pleasures ran the risk of being classed with them and of being treated by public opinion with the same austerity. But Clodia did not care for public opinion. She carried into her private conduct and all her actions the same ardor and passions as her brother. Ready for all excesses and not blushing to acknowledge them, loving and hating passionately, incapable of self-restraint and detesting self-control, she was a true representative of the race to which she belonged. She liked to shock people and she succeeded in shocking the elders of her period. But she fascinated the youths and they flocked to her house and shared in her extravagances.

¹ Plutarch *Cicero*, 29 and 30.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 172 ff.

Clodia counted among her friends men of letters and politicians, poets and great gentlemen, differing in position and fortune, but all friends of letters and fond of pleasure—Cornificius, Quintus Varus, Helvius Cinna, Asinius Pollio, then a young man of brilliant promise, Licinius Calvus, statesman and poet, Caelius, and above all Cicero and Catullus. Her circle influenced both politics and letters accordingly; from it sprang the most violent epigrams against Caesar. . . . It is a strange movement in Roman society when one comes across these meetings of distinguished, cultured people where the conversation ranged from letters to politics. In it we see the beginnings of cosmopolitan life, *la vie du monde*.¹

Clodia touched Cicero's life through several avenues of approach: in his bitter antagonism toward her brother Clodius; in his biased patronage of young Caelius; and earlier, when through her and her sister-in-law Mucia, wife of Pompey, and therefore friendly to Cicero, Cicero tried to appease Metellus Nepos, brother-in-law of Clodia (cf. *Ad Fam.* v. 2). In her, therefore, we can see a tie that connects not a few important political men of the time, a point in proof of our thesis that the importance of the women of the period was the political prominence of their husbands or of the men of their families or acquaintance. Or, stating it from the standpoint of the women, if they did not as a class, or as a whole, work for political advantage or recognition as individuals, they worked through their influence upon men, just as the anti-feminist of today does and holds as the best way for women to gain what they want politically.

The anger and hatred of the Clodian family pursued Cicero through another woman, one who belongs to the latter days of the Republic, but one who inherited that hatred from her husband Clodius—Fulvia, later the wife of Marcus Antonius. As she held in her hand the guiding-strings, so to speak, attached to so many men of Antonius' circle, we shall discuss her later. Suffice it to mention here the way in which she seems to serve as a connecting link between the régime of Caesar and the struggles between Antonius and Octavius. Moreover, between Clodius and Antonius she had had as her husband the Caesarian, C. Curio. The psychological study of a woman who must have passed through so many and varied experiences, had we only more information,

Cic. *Pro Caelio*.

would be a most interesting one. How far, for instance, did her experiences as the wife of Clodius and of Curio influence her actions as the wife of Antonius? Though in the case of Clodia, as Tyrrell and Purser remind us,¹ she is known to us only, or chiefly, from her enemies, Cicero, Caelius, and Catullus, the very bitterness of their onslaught testifies to her greatness; and Cicero tried to find out through her even Pompey's attitude toward himself.²

Another example of the culture of the period is to be found in Sempronia, sister of the Gracchi, and mother of D. Brutus. How unlike her mother, the noble Cornelia! And yet was she? Might not her enthusiastic espousal of Catiline's cause have been in her simply the revolutionary tendencies of her family expressing themselves in the only outlet which she had at her disposal? May we believe that that revolutionary spirit, handed down to her son, led him to join the conspiracy against Caesar? It seems very probable. As Fowler³ described her, following Sallust's account of her,

she seems to have been a woman who found steady married life incompatible with literary and artistic tastes. She could play and dance more elegantly than an honest woman should; she played fast and loose with her money and equally so with her good fame; had no scruples in denying a debt, or in helping a murder; yet she had plenty of *esprit*, could write verses and talk brilliantly; and she knew how to assume a modest air on occasion. She seems to have been the first of a series of ladies who during the next century and later were to be a power in politics, and most of whom were capable of crime, public and private.⁴

She was one of those women who played the game of politics by using their seductive allurements as their most potent weapon. Catiline welcomed them to his cause,⁵ for through them he hoped to bind their husbands to his conspiracy. Or he used the women themselves, and their property, as he did that of Aurelia Orestilla, his second wife, of whom, as Sallust says, none ever spoke fair except about her beauty.⁶ She helped him to meet his debts, *et alienis nominibus libertas Orestillae suis filiaeque copiis persolveret*;⁷ but

¹ Tyrrell and Purser edition of *Cicero's Letters*, III, pp. xliii f.

² Cicero *Ad Att.* ii. 22. 5.

⁵ Drumann, V, 416.

³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 152 ff.

⁶ Sallust *Cat.* 15 and 35.

⁴ Sallust *Catiline* xxv.

⁷ *Ibid.* 35. 3.

as the rumor was that he had killed his son for love of her,¹ since she did not wish to have a stepson, we can hardly believe that her influence upon him was for good. Caelius² mentions the betrothal of her daughter to Cornificius, and we cannot help wondering whether Cornificius found in her the virtues and vices of her mother, and of the woman whom we have mentioned above as attaching him to her circle.

Before passing to the women who directly and indirectly influenced the two great men of the period, Caesar and Pompey, we may mention the few other women who were concerned in Cicero's life, his sister-in-law Pomponia, wife of Quintus and daughter of Atticus; Caerellia, the "Stella" of Cicero, as Tyrrell and Purser³ call her; Caecilia Metella; Hirtia; Pompeia, daughter of Pompeius Magnus; and Postumia, wife of Servius Sulpicius Rufus.

Pomponia we know merely because of the family difficulties between her and Quintus; but we may easily suppose that there were many women at Rome like her, not "votaries of the new culture," as Mrs. Putnam expresses it,⁴ like Clodia and Sempronia, but women in whom the "new conditions brought migraine and irritable nerves." That she possessed nerves we see very easily from Cicero's frank discussion of her affairs with her brother Atticus. Perhaps a large part of her discontent was due to thwarted ambition and a desire for her husband to count for more; for Cicero himself in his letters to his brother seems to voice some such desire on his own part also.

Pompeia and Hirtia we need merely mention in passing, because of the possibilities which lay beneath the suggestion of either of them as the successor of Terentia as the wife of Cicero. The attitude toward marriage at all times at Rome was a social and political, not an individualistic one,⁵ as we have said before, a fact which explains why we know about the wives and families of famous men. Cicero's alliance with either of these women would have had some political significance. Supposition along such lines we know is fruitless, and, unless founded upon fact, entirely in vain. But

¹ Valerius Maximus ix. 1. 9.

² *Ad Fam.* viii. 7. 2.

³ *Op. cit.*, IV, xxxi.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 59.

⁵ Ferrero, *Women of the Caesars*, p. 15.

knowing full well the tendencies of the times, we cannot help wondering whether Cicero's vacillations might not have been checked if he had married Pompeia. And if he had accepted the sister of A. Hirtius, consul with Pansa, in 43 B.C., and friend of Antonius, might Hirtius' influence have availed to avert the catastrophe which overwhelmed Cicero? Cicero apparently more than any other man of the period kept his public and his private life separate and distinct, and all that he sought in a second marriage was a means whereby to clear up his financial difficulties (cf. *Ad Att.* xii. 32. 1; *Plut. Cic.* 41; *Dio Cassius* xlv; *Ad Fam.* iv. 14). Hirtia did not possess those means, so he married Publilia; and she, poor thing, was too young to know what she was getting into.

Among the friends, if friends they were, who tried to settle the marriage question for Cicero was Postumia, the wife of Servius Sulpicius Rufus (cf. *Ad Att.* xii. 1). We know very little about her. Tyrrell and Purser inform us that her husband, Sulpicius, "incurred much odium with the Pompeians for his attitude during the crisis between their leader and Caesar, though the blame in all probability was due rather to Postumia, restless and energetic, than to Sulpicius himself."¹ And we see in *Ad Att.* x. 9. 3 that she and her son are urging Cicero to await Sulpicius at Cumae; so we know that to a certain extent she too tried to play the game of politics. That she also played the game of love we can see from Cicero's letter to Atticus (v. 21. 9), where she is suspected of an intrigue with Pomptinus. Cicero seems to have resented her meddling in his private affairs. But her connection with his private life was insignificant compared with the wreckage which Caecilia Metella spread in it, through her intrigue with Dolabella, the husband of the beloved Tullia (cf. *Ad Att.* xi. 23. 3).

¹ *Op. cit.*, IV, xxxviii.

[To be concluded]